



Agricultural Issues
Washington D.C. Congressional Visits
March 10 & 11, 2009

Research Funding

The South Carolina Peach Council requests financial support for Peach Tree Short Life (PTSL) and Fruit Tree Genetics Research at Clemson University. The revitalization of the peach industry in South Carolina and throughout the Southeast is a clear indication of the positive results of this research. It is imperative that we conduct this type of research in the East where weather conditions, diseases, and crop pests differ greatly from that of the West coast.

One of the greatest concerns in the peach industry worldwide, and the SCPC's #1 research priority, is Armillaria (oak root rot). This disease is causing significant tree mortality in South Carolina and around the world. Presently there is no cure or resistance in peaches. Clemson University has assembled a. This internationally acclaimed research team conducts their research within the Genomics Institute on the Clemson campus. Dr. Bert Abbott, a Clemson University endowed chair known throughout the world for his tree fruit genomic research, serves as team leader for Clemson's Rosaceae Genetic Research Team. This internationally commended research team conducts research within the Genomics Institute on the Clemson campus.

Adequate funding will enable the team to finalize the peach genome thus enabling researchers across the globe to significantly reduce research timelines. This type of genetic research is the only avenue to a cure for diseases like Armillaria. Genetic research will also lead to enhanced nutritional value of peaches, rural economic growth, and improved productivity of the South Carolina peach industry.

The South Carolina Peach Council has financially supported this research in the past and will continue to do so in the future. However, without federal assistance, our dollars fall short of the monies needed to see real strides in tree fruit research.

***** We solicit interaction between members of our delegation and USDA-APHIS officials to reveal the potentially devastating effects on countless fruits and ornamentals if a cure for or resistance to Armillaria is not developed. As the home state of such a highly acclaimed team of researchers, South Carolina should undoubtedly continue leading the way in Rosaceae Genetic Research.***

Listed below are individuals who are qualified to comment on this issue and who will welcome the opportunity to speak to you.

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